

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA

LEAVING CERTIFICATE

FRENCH

DRAFT

Guidelines for Teachers

LEAVING CERTIFICATE

Aims

1. The **general aim of education** is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, expressive, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and home life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure.
2. Leaving Certificate programmes are presented within this general aim, with a particular emphasis on the preparation of students for the requirements of further education or training, for employment and for their role as participative enterprising citizens.
3. All Leaving Certificate programmes aim to provide continuity and progression from the Junior Certificate programme, with an appropriate balance between personal and social (including moral and spiritual) development, vocational studies and preparation for further education and for adult and working life. The relative weighting given to these features may vary according to the particular programme being taken.
4. Programmes leading to the award of the Leaving Certificate are offered in three forms:
 - (i) Leaving Certificate Programme
 - (ii) Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
 - (iii) Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

All Leaving Certificate programmes emphasise the importance of:

- self-directed learning and independent thought
- a spirit of inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, self reliance, initiative and enterprise.
- preparation for further education and for adult and working life.

The Leaving Certificate Programme (LCP) aims to:

- enable students to realise their full potential in terms of their personal, social,

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intellectual and vocational growth

- prepare students for their role as active and participative citizens
- prepare students for progression onto further education, training or employment.

It provides students with a broad, balanced education while allowing for some specialisation. Syllabuses are provided in a wide range of subjects. All Leaving Certificate subjects are offered at Ordinary and Higher levels. In addition, Mathematics and Irish are also offered at Foundation level.

Student performance in the Leaving Certificate Programme can be used for purposes of selection into further education, employment, training and higher education.

7. **The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCAP)** is a discrete two-year programme, designed for those students who do not wish to proceed directly to third level education or for those whose needs, aspirations and aptitudes are not adequately catered for by the other Leaving Certificate programmes.

LCAP is structured around three main elements which are interrelated and interdependent:-

- Vocational Preparation
- Vocational Education
- General Education

It is characterised by educational experiences of an active, practical and student centred nature.

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) aims, in particular, to:

- foster in students a spirit of enterprise and initiative
- develop students interpersonal vocational and technological skills.

LCVP students study a minimum of five Leaving Certificate subjects (at Higher, Ordinary or Foundation levels), including Irish and two subjects from specified vocational subject groupings. They are also required to take a recognised course in a Modern European Language, other than Irish or English.

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In addition students take three Link Modules which provide a curriculum coherence for the LCVP.

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FOREWORD

The Minister for Education has asked the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment to revise the subject syllabuses for the Leaving Certificate programme in the context of the national programme of curriculum reform currently in progress. This process of revision is being implemented on a phased basis. The first phase of syllabus revision consists of six subjects for implementation in schools in September 1995, and for examination in 1997 and subsequent years.

The revision of the Leaving Certificate is being conducted with particular reference to the need

- to provide continuity and progression from the Junior Certificate programme;
- to cater for the diversity of aptitude and achievement among Leaving Certificate students through appropriate courses at both Ordinary and Higher levels and also at Foundation Level in the case of Irish and Mathematics;

- To address the vocational dimension inherent in the various Leaving Certificate subjects;

In association with the syllabuses, **Teacher Guidelines** have been developed, through the NCCA course committees, as an aid to teachers in the implementation of the new courses. These guidelines are intended as both a permanent resource for teachers and a resource for use in the in-career development programme for teachers, sponsored by the Department of Education.

These Guidelines are not prescriptive. They provide suggestions for teachers in relation to teaching practice. Particular attention is paid to aspects of the new syllabus which may not be familiar to teachers, in terms of content or methodology.

The Guidelines are published jointly by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Department of Education.

In particular the role of John McCarthy (NCCA Education Officer for Modern Languages) is acknowledged for his work in designing and editing the overall structure of the Guidelines for Modern Languages and for drafting and editing the Guidelines for French.

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Introduction

These guidelines for teaching French in the Leaving Certificate programme provide:

- **a rationale for the syllabus content and structure (Chapter 1)**
- **an overview of current principles and good practice in modern language teaching (Chapters 2 and 3)**
- **suggestions for teaching the syllabus content with pupils of varying abilities (Chapter 4)**
- **a range of examples for classroom activities within the context of an integrated approach (Chapters 5 and 6)**
- **suggestions for using literary texts (Chapter 7)**
- **assessment criteria and descriptions of expected performance at different grades. (Chapter 8)**

The examples given are offered as a suggested compendium of ideas for teachers and pupils to choose from. For purposes of clarity and to highlight varying levels of difficulty the examples provided relate as far as possible to one particular theme i.e. studies/work. Suggestions are also provided for ways in which a text can be reintroduced at successive stages to facilitate progression in the development of the learners' skills. The guidelines should be viewed as an additional resource and not as a strait-jacket i.e. teachers are free to pick and choose from those suggestions which they feel will be useful to them. It is not recommended that the three components of the syllabus be taught separately but rather that workplans be based on linking together all three areas of content. Chapters 5 and 6 are provided by way of suggestion

based on linking together all three areas of content. Chapters 5 and 6 are provided by way of suggestion as to how a programme of work involving an integrated approach to (a) the syllabus content and (b) a progression in the development of the learners' skills could be planned. Where such a detailed scheme is not possible or not considered desirable there will still be a need to plan a programme of work that is systematic, sequential and coherent and the suggestions offered in these guidelines are aimed at facilitating that process.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment would like to express its thanks to Authentik Language Learning Resources Ltd. for permission to reproduce examples of activities used in Authentik, to Cambridge University Press, the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and the various other sources of materials used and acknowledged in these guidelines.

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1. The Syllabus

Summary:	1.1	Structure
	1.2	Basic Communicative Proficiency
	1.3	Language Awareness
	1.4	Cultural Awareness

1.1 Structure

The Leaving Certificate syllabus for French contains the following three broad components:

Basic Communicative Proficiency

Language Awareness

Cultural Awareness

This syllabus structure aims to lead every pupil towards four basic outcomes as a result of the experience of modern language learning in the classroom:

- (a) a communicative ability in French
- (b) an awareness about language and communication
- (c) an awareness of the culture associated with the French language
- (d) some idea of how to go about learning a foreign language

The structure of the syllabus arises from its aims in the following way:

Aims:

1.. COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

2. HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

4. CULTURAL, SOCIAL
POLITICAL DIVERSITY

3. LANGUAGE LEARNING

Structure:

BASIC COMMUNICATIVE
PROFICIENCY

LANGUAGE AWARENESS

CULTURAL AWARENESS

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Content:

ROOM	
DAY	
RE	
IR	

An integrated approach to the three broad components of the syllabus is recommended, i.e., classroom activities should, where possible, involve more than one of the three areas, e.g. the choice of certain authentic materials might provide the focus for working on certain aspects of any two or all three components. Many of the activities listed in the **Language Awareness** section will help learners to develop the more global skills necessary to perform activities outlined under **Basic Communicative Proficiency**. Activities described under **Cultural Awareness** will allow learners to extend many topics listed under Basic Communicative Proficiency by drawing comparisons, giving examples, describing differences in the way of life of different communities etc. Detailed suggestions for implementing an integrated approach are outlined in Chapter 6.

The syllabus content is designed in units of **General Activities/Themes**, with **Performance Targets** designed to help teachers and learners to work out schemes of work and to ensure learners are clear about what is expected of them in relation to each General Activity/Theme. Some of the communicative and linguistic skills including the grammatical knowledge that students will need for the realisation of the Performance Targets are elucidated in terms of **Linguistic Skills - Structures and Grammar**.

The three components of the syllabus are now described in greater detail.

1.2 Basic Communicative Proficiency

(a) Using the target language in the classroom

The first aim of the syllabus is to foster in learners the communicative skills to enable them to communicate effectively in the target language. There is broad agreement that learners need opportunities to engage in communication based on an exchange of information. Having learners engage in a variety of tasks which encourage them to negotiate meaning when communication problems arise

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is deemed essential. Emphasis is placed on what the learner should be able to do in the target language. This section addresses the immediate needs of the learner e.g. in the classroom:

- **requesting permission to do something**
- **asking for clarification**
- **making excuses, etc**

as well as his/her potential needs outside the classroom e.g.

- **buying goods and services**
- **dealing with emergencies**
- **coping with travel and transport**

The Leaving Certificate syllabus is to be seen as including all the basic transactional (e.g. **passing on messages**) and interactional (e.g. **meeting and getting to know people and maintaining social relations**) skills specified at Junior Certificate level. The Leaving Certificate syllabus additionally emphasises such functions as negotiating and includes activities aimed at developing learners' discourse competence e.g.

- **Initiating a conversation**
- **Terminating a conversation**
- **Managing a conversation**

(b) Communicative Methodology

Since priority is attached to communication in this section of the syllabus - understanding, negotiating, expressing meaning - the approach to methodology should be a communicative one. Learners should be encouraged to use the language for communicative purposes. Real opportunities for communication, where there exists an information or opinion gap, can occur in the classroom. Where possible French should be the language of the classroom e.g. asking students why they have arrived late, haven't done their homework, clarifying instructions, evaluating and correcting pupils'

performance and for purposes of disciplinary interventions. When French is the normal means of communication learners are enabled to see that the language is not only the object of study but also a medium of real communication.

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(c) Types of Tasks

In order to learn to use the language spontaneously learners also need frequent opportunities to work with each other on suitable tasks that involve a genuine exchange of information.

The following points have been made regarding the effectiveness of different task types

1. Two way tasks, since they make the exchange of meaning obligatory produce more negotiation of meaning than one-way tasks.
2. Planned tasks that require learners to prepare in advance encourage more negotiation than unplanned tasks.
3. Closed tasks which require a definite ending/resolution produce more negotiation than open tasks.
4. Convergent tasks, requiring the participants to agree on a solution promote more negotiation than divergent tasks, where different views are accepted.

1.3 Language Awareness

The Language Awareness section of the syllabus contains activities and themes designed to

- (i) stimulate learners' interest in language issues;
- (ii) provide learners with skills and learning strategies to help them be more effective language learners and
- (iii) provide a framework for the teaching and acquisition of grammatical knowledge within a broadly communicative approach.

(i) Stimulating Learners' Interest in Language Issues

The first general activity/theme: **Learning about language from target language material**, is aimed at stimulating learners' interest in language issues and enthusiasm for language learning. Areas in which awareness of language can usefully be fostered within pupils through the development of insights are:

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- language as communication
- language growth and change
- language variety
- creative use of language {including some features of literary language}
- language and culture
- how languages affect each other e.g. loan words,

Selection of texts dealing with language-related themes and learning activities based on such language - related themes can also enhance learners' intellectual development and awareness of other cultures. Once the learners have worked on the linguistic and information content of a text they can then be encouraged to transfer this information to productive skills. For example, the following advertisement could form the basis of a comprehension exercise designed to:

- (a) make learners aware of where French is spoken and how it may differ from the French spoken in France and
- (b) give rise to discussion of other language related issues:

A. Lisez cette annonce et répondez aux questions:

1. Quel est le sujet de l'ouvrage *Le Français Québécois*?
2. D'après l'annonce comment le français parlé au Canada pourrait-il être différent du français parlé en France?
3. Comment s'explique le (s) dans le mot *parlé(s)* dans le texte?
4. D'après le texte comment s'explique le fait que les caractéristiques du français écrit sont mieux connues que celles du français parlé?

B Sujets de Discussion

- Combien de pays francophones pouvez-vous nommer?
- Pourriez-vous suggérer pourquoi on parle français dans ces pays?
- Comment est-ce que le français parlé dans ce pays pourrait être différent du français parlé en France?

(ii) Equipping Learners with Skills and Strategies

In the formal learning context of the classroom students can be more effective language learners if they understand something about language learning and take some responsibility for their own learning. In this way learners can develop positive attitudes towards language learning and become increasingly independent in their work. Language Awareness can also contribute to learner autonomy and enhance learners' chances of success by equipping them with the skills to find their own way. While recognising that it is helpful to teachers and learners to have a defined content syllabus it is accepted that it would be

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impossible to include in the syllabus all the words and structures that learners will meet when listening to or reading authentic material in the target language. Learners will therefore need to develop communication and strategies to cope successfully with words and structures they have not previously met and to make use of context and background information to compensate for inadequate linguistic resources. Learners should be encouraged to identify and solve learning problems and to assess their own performance and progress.

The following text (adapted from *Parler L'Europe*, published by Le Bureau pour les Langues Moins Répandues, 1993) contains information about the different ways in which children may learn a second language, the role played by adults in the process, the difference between acquisition and learning etc. Such a text could be used as the basis for activities to get the learners to reflect on the language learning process.

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(a) Avant de lire le texte réfléchissez sur les différentes façons d'acquérir une autre langue en discutant sur:

- (i) ce que vous trouvez difficile/facile en apprenant le français;
 - (ii) le rôle des adultes dans la réussite d'une langue chez les enfants;
 - (iii) l'importance d'entendre parler régulièrement la langue pour pouvoir l'acquérir;
 - (iv) ce que vous pouvez faire pour vous aider à acquérir une autre langue.
- {b) Maintenant lisez le texte et
- (i) expliquez la différence entre «acquérir» une langue et «apprendre» une langue.
 - (ii) suggérez pourquoi la télévision et la culture pop peuvent jouer un rôle important dans l'apprentissage des langues.

Research into successful language learning strategies show that "good learners" learn to:

(a) organise information about language.

The following activities are aimed at encouraging students to develop such organising habits; in this example the focus is on the gender and positioning of adjectives in French.

The following type of exercise is aimed at promoting self-directed learning by developing the learners'
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ability to use clues to meaning contained in the text and to form and

to form and test hypotheses about language:

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Learner autonomy can also be encouraged by helping the student

© **to develop strategies for making sense of the target language**

by engaging in pre-reading exercises such as the following

Making Use of Linguistic Knowledge

It is generally accepted that the role of the first language in second language acquisition can be a very beneficial and positive one. One example of this is the way in which the general meaning of a foreign
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language text can often be understood by people with little or no knowledge of the language in question. Similarly useful strategies are, outlined in other Performance Targets e.g.

- **Making meaningful target language sentences out of jumbled target language words/phrases/clauses**
- **Making short pieces of meaningful and coherent target language text out of jumbled target language sentences**
- **Working out the implicit inferences of statements made in spoken/written target language text**
- **Describing and commenting on any ways in which you have made your own personal contribution to the process of learning, the target language.**

The use in particular of authentic materials will mean that learners will inevitably be faced with linguistic elements they have not previously encountered. Rather than being daunted by such materials learners should be encouraged to develop techniques for dealing with such texts. Among the strategies that will help learners to understand texts containing new elements are the following:

- (a) **ignoring words which are not needed for a successful completion of the task set:** many texts contain words which are not essential for an understanding of the main points of the text
- (b) **using the visual and verbal context:** the layout, title, related pictures etc. can give the skilled reader many clues about the purpose and content of a text. Pupils can also be taught how to use tone, attitude, information of speakers to help them to infer meaning

The following example provides the basis for a number of general 'warm-up' type questions involving the strategies described above. (This text will be re-introduced at various stages in the guidelines to illustrate how progression in the development of the learners' skill might be facilitated).

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© **making use of grammatical markers and categories**

Learners can also infer meaning by being able to identify lexical items as verbs, nouns, adjectives etc and by being able to recognise plural forms, verb tenses, word order etc. e.g.

(d) **making use of world knowledge and cultural knowledge,**

learners should be taught to use their knowledge of regularities in the real world to anticipate what people may say or write about e.g. the order in which events are likely to have happened etc. Often it is enough to follow closely the development of the action in order to overcome most of the lexical difficulties. Unknown words are also often explained further on in the text or a synonym is given. Cultural knowledge such as approximate prices, rimes, sizes etc.can help learners understanding recordings etc.

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(e) using common patterns between mother tongue and the target language,

learners can make use of patterns - there are many words in another language which can be understood with the application of a few simple rules relating to e.g. endings, prefixes, plurals, tenses etc.

Common patterns in French and English

- (i) 're' prefix (e.g. commencer- recommencer, faire - refaire)
- (ii) the 'eur' ending applied to verbs (e.g. employer - employeur) and applied to adjectives (e.g. grand, grandeur, etc.)
- (iii) 'ette' ending (e.g. maison - maisonnette, tarte - tartelette, fille-fillette)
- (iv) 'able' ending (e.g. laver -lavable, manger - mangeable)
- (v) 'aine' ending (e.g. quinze - quinzaine, cent - centaine, douze - douzaine)
- (vi) 'té' ending (e.g. bon - bonté, beau - beauté)
- (vii) 'ier' ending (e.g. épicerie, - épicier. police - policier, ferme - fermier)
- (viii) 'in' prefix (e.g. actif- inactif, connu - inconnu, cassable - incassable)
- (ix) 'ion' and 'ation' endings (e.g. réparer - réparation, inventer - invention).

using cognates and near cognates,

pupils can guess intelligently the meaning of words in the target language on the basis of cognates of equal or almost equal graphic form and with the same meaning; analogies with a small graphic difference (omission, addition, substitution of letters); analogies which are easily recognised in spite of a different spelling.

Cognates and near-cognates in French and English

- (i) The French word adds an 'e' (e.g. branche, liquide, signe, vaste)
- (ii) The English word adds an 'e' (e.g. futur, masculin, paradis, pur)
- (iii) Words which end with 'e', 'é', or 'ée' in French and with 'y' in English (e.g. beauté, liberté, mystère, armée)
- (iv) Words which end with i or 'ie' in French and 'y' in English (e.g. économie, parti, tragédie)
- (v) Words which end with 'aire' in French and with 'ar' or 'ary' in English (e.g. grammaire, militaire, populaire)
- (vi) Words which end with 'el' in French and with 'al' in English (e.g. individuel, officiel)

- (vii) French adverbs ending with 'ment' which end with 'ly' in English (e.g. complètement, généralement, spécialement)
 - (viii) Verbs which add 'r' or 'er' in the infinitive in French (e.g. admirer, confirmer, inspecter)
 - (ix) Verbs which end with 'er' in French and with 'ate' in English (e.g. assassiner, cultiver, décorer)
 - (x) Words where 'o' or 'u' in English is replaced by 'ou' in French (e.g. approuver, gouvernement, mouvement, bouddiste)
 - (xi) Words where a 'd' is added in English (e.g. aventure, avance, juge)
 - (xii) Present participles in 'ant' in French and 'ing' in English (e.g. dégoûtant, commençant, nageant), providing the infinitive of the verb is a listed word
 - (xiii) Words which end with 'e' or 'eux' in French and with 'ous' in English (e.g. énorme, précieux, religieux)
 - (xiv) Words which end with 'que' in French and 'c', 'ck', 'ch', 'k', or 'cal' in English (e.g. atomique, attaque, physique, risque, époque)
 - (xv) Words which end with 'f' in French and with 've' in English (e.g. actif, adjectif, possessif)
 - (xvi) Words which end with 'eur' in French and with 'our', 'or' or 'er' in English (e.g. boxeur, empereur, vigueur)
 - (xvii) Words which end with 'e' or 're' in French and with 'er' in English (e.g. ministre, ordre, interprète)
 - (xviii) Words which end with 'e' in French or 'a' in English (e.g. drame, propagande)
 - (xix) Words where 'u' in English is replaced by 'o' in French (e.g. fonction, prononciation)
 - (xx) Words where 'oun' in English is replaced by 'on' in French (e.g. annoncer, prononcer)
 - (xxi) Words which have a circumflex accent in French and an 's' in English (e.g. forêt, honnête, intérêt, tempête)
 - (xxii) Words where 'dé' in French is replaced by 'dis' in English (e.g. décourager, déguster)
 - (xxiii) Words where 'é' or 'es' in French is replaced by 's' in English (e.g. espace, éponge).
- (Source: French Syllabus for GCSE 1994, Northern Examining Association)

A number of verbal strategies which will help learners to compensate for deficiencies in vocabulary and structures can also be easily learned e.g.

- using a word which refers to a similar item,
- description of physical properties
- requests for help

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- paraphrase

- reference to the function of e.g. an object

The availability of a range of strategies such as these and flexibility in their use represent an important advantage for language learners. All language learners make use of communication strategies.

(iii) The third dimension of the Language Awareness component of the syllabus i.e. teaching and acquiring grammatical knowledge which also relates to using linguistic knowledge is dealt with separately under the heading **The Role of Grammar**.

1.4 Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is an essential aspect of successful language learning. Consequently, the third component of the syllabus is aimed at developing in learners an awareness of the culture of the target language community. Culture in the context of the syllabus concerns in particular the way of life of the target language society but also the diversity of its cultural heritage (literature, visual arts, music etc).

The communicative objectives of the syllabus aim to equip learners with a communicative capacity to converse with speakers of the target language and to facilitate their movement in the target language community. Implicit in the cultural aims of the syllabus is the promotion of the intellectual and social development of learners whose perceptions and insights into the other culture should not remain unchanged and superficial.

The cultural awareness component provides a means of implementing these aims of the syllabus through performance targets based on a comparative methodology: e.g.

Describing the similarities and contrasts between normal everyday life in Ireland and normal everyday life in one of the communities associated with the target language with particular reference to, for example: - where people live, etc.

Learners are encouraged to go beyond a merely superficial appraisal of the other culture i.e.

Critically examining national stereotypes

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and to interact with the other culture at an affective level i.e.

Stating and defending personal opinions about the desirability of maintaining, developing or changing relationships with the community in question.

The implicit methodological approach aims at providing learners with background information

and promoting acceptance and tolerance of cultural differences. Critical appraisal, where appropriate, can also make an important contribution to the development of: cultural awareness. This component also provides opportunities for learners to, get involved in project work based on cultural themes.

Texts can be selected for various activities on the basis of the information they contain about French society or the way of life in France. Since authentic texts can often be difficult for learners to process, certain paragraphs could be highlighted and used for vocabulary work, global comprehension, and, if appropriate, for follow-up speaking and writing activities. The following texts, for example, provide information and insights into the composition of temporary French society.

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(a) Leur idée de la France

32000 enfants d'étrangers nés en France obtiennent chaque année automatiquement la nationalité française le jour de leur majorité. Demain, ils devront la demander. Et s'ils n'y pensent pas . . . ?

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Methodology

Learners' cultural awareness can be developed in a number of ways as specified in the Performance Targets. The use of authentic materials including literary texts, can promote awareness of the way of life of the country in a direct way and enable learners to deepen their insights into both the other country and their own. Such materials often contain surveys etc. conducted in the other language community. Learners might use this information to carry out their own surveys to describe similarities and contrasts between Ireland and the other country. The following text for example contains information about young French peoples' attitude to possible future careers and provides the basis for exercises involving comparison with Irish attitudes to this topic:

Cultural Themes

Initially, the students' awareness of the other culture could be developed in relation to familiar contexts such as the family, home, meals, birthdays, holidays, spare time activities and familiar "services", opening and closing times and in familiar contexts within the social system such as schooling and housing. The range of contexts within which their cultural awareness is developed can be progressively extended to include more abstract themes such as the values and attitudes of the other culture e.g. the role of the family, individualism and nationalism, politics etc. similar to the theme of the following survey:

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(c) Sociolinguistic Awareness

The sociocultural dimension of communicative competence requires that learners should also acquire a knowledge of linguistic conventions for using the target language. Learners should develop an awareness of language forms and registers appropriate to purpose and context in familiar and informal situations and in less familiar and more formal situations. Many of the Performance Targets listed in the Language Awareness component of the syllabus are specifically designed to promote

such sociolinguistic awareness in learners. The following explanation of different registers is aimed at helping learners to become aware of how language varies according to context of use.

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A judicious choice of situations for roleplay activities embracing a wide range of contexts will also help learners to develop an awareness of the need for appropriateness of language to situation, as in the following example, including the purposeful use of social conventions in the other culture, such as forms of address, symbols of relationship (hand shakes, kissing) and polite formulae.

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(ii) Lisez ensuite l'article, c'est-à-dire les deux colonnes de gauche de la page 15. Comparez votre position sur les éléments ci-dessus à celle exprimée dans le texte.

(iii) La plupart des éléments décrits dans le texte sont très négatifs. Ajoutez un dernier paragraphe à l'article dans lequel vous exposez des qualités recherchées par les employeurs.

The examples given above in relation to language awareness and cultural awareness are provided by way of elucidation of what is meant by these terms as used in the syllabus. Detailed suggestions for incorporating these areas of the syllabus into everyday classroom activities are outlined in chapters 5 and 6.

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2. *Providing for Different Aspects of Learning*

Summary:

2.1 Introduction

- 2.2 Language Acquisition and Language Learning
- 2.3 A Balanced Approach
- 2.4 Sequencing of Activities
- 2.5 Deep-end Strategies
- 2.6 The Role of Speaking and Writing Activities
- 2.7 Activities that Promote Linguistic Progression

2.1 Introduction

The approach to second language teaching based on communicative methodology introduced through the 1980's while successful in many respects is now seen to have had its shortcomings also. In particular the question of the relationship between communication, accuracy and creativity is being raised. Ideally the teaching and learning approach should enable the pupils to use the language purposefully, appropriately, creatively and accurately. While progress has been made in relation to fluency and ability to use the language in a range of situations lack of accuracy and creativity have been cited as a cause of concern. This puts the role of grammar back on the agenda arising from the belief that some form of grammar control based on implicit or explicit knowledge is necessary for creativity and accuracy in the use of language. This raises the questions of what 'grammar' to teach and how to teach it. It is necessary firstly to consider the different ways in which language can be learned.

2.2 Language Acquisition and Language Learning

Language learning can come about in a number of ways. In demonstrating the complexity of the processes involved in learning a second language a distinction is made between the acquisition process and the formal learning process.

The Acquisition Process

The acquisition process refers to the largely subconscious process by which we acquire our first language or another language naturally as a result of attempts to use the language.

The Formal Learning Process

In the formal learning process learners become consciously aware of the rules of the target

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language and the rules for using the language through conscious learning strategies such as studying, comparing, analysing, practising etc.

Effective language learning depends on these two processes being taken into account and the teaching approach being adapted accordingly. For spontaneous language use involving such characteristics as:-

- unpredictability
- choice
- information gap, opinion gap,

learners will be mostly dependent on that which has been acquired or internalised. This is not to say that explicit knowledge about the target language does not play an important role. Such knowledge can help learners particularly in non-spontaneous communication e.g. in grammar-focused exercises, in reading and writing and in speaking where there is time for preparation. Whether conscious learning of grammar helps learners internalise knowledge of the system of rules required for spontaneous communication in spoken language is a subject of much debate. However, activities where they are required to use consciously acquired knowledge of the target language in situations involving choice and unpredictability can help them to extend their range of use of rules and use language creatively.

2.3 A Balanced Approach

Second language learning in the formal context of the classroom necessitates a judicious mixture of activities aimed at providing learners with knowledge about the target language and activities involving use of the language for communicative purposes. The prime concern will be the development of global skills for communication. A balanced approach to methodology will endeavour to combine both an emphasis on conscious learning and a communicative orientation. If learners are required to engage exclusively in communicative activities based on language use they may not acquire knowledge of the language inferentially that would allow them to use language creatively in new situations. Likewise, learners may not be able to make use of their formally learnt knowledge and skills unless they have been required to use language to create their own meanings in genuinely communicative situations.

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2.4 Sequencing of Activities

Learning activities can be sequenced so as to coordinate both conscious learning and learning through using the language in a systematic way. Whether fluency should be promoted before accuracy, or after, or at the same time is an interesting question. While the communicative approach has tended to focus on fluency first with a gradual refinement of accuracy over time the reverse strategy advocates accurate production from the start, building up to a more fluent use of language. Since answers as to which approach is more successful overall are not abundantly available an approach alternating systematically between the two may be the wisest course. An appropriate balance could be based on a continuum involving activities and exercises designed to develop skills and strategies concerned with the building up of knowledge and skills leading to communicative language use. Progression can be perceived in terms of a continuum containing activities targeted at both kinds of learning. Activities at the beginning of the continuum, aimed at the conscious learning

process, may be viewed as laying a foundation for communicative performance or being an investment in an underlying linguistic competence. Activities at this end of the continuum are aimed at the components or sub-competencies that underpin communicative competence including the structures and vocabulary necessary for communication. Activities involving communicative language use at the other end of the continuum can be designed to have a communicative "pull" effect on this underlying linguistic competence through fluency-oriented tasks i.e. learners can be required to express themselves accurately and creatively by using what they have learned consciously at an earlier phase. Activities aimed at both kinds of learning might be seen in the following terms:

pre-communicative (e.g. practising vocabulary etc.) → **authentic communication**
planned discourse (limited to a number of functions) → **unplanned discourse**
form focused (e.g. focus on specific grammatical points) → **fluency focused**
contrivance (e.g. learners required to produce certain forms) → **negotiation of meaning**

2.5 Deep-end Strategies

Initial activities may of course often be located at the fluency-oriented end of the continuum and be followed by activities focusing on grammar etc. Putting learners in at the deep-end (i.e. before they have worked on the vocabulary or grammatical features they are likely to encounter in a given text) can prepare them to cope with unpredictability); an essential feature of communication. The traditional approach of presenting a new structure, practising it and finally having the learners

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attempt to apply it to a communicative activity can be reversed. It is also possible to start with a communicative activity and then present the necessary language that pupils need, practise this and then return to the communicative activity.

The performance targets listed in the Basic Communicative Proficiency section of the syllabus are, in the main, directed at communicative activities and language learning through language use. Many of the activities listed in the Language Awareness component are aimed at equipping pupils with learning strategies to promote learner autonomy and equip learners with lexicogrammatical knowledge as well as other aspects of communicative competence.

1.6 The Role of Speaking and Writing Activities

The following characterisation of language learning is designed to describe the ways in which the learners may actively engage in the learning process

Learners start with
an objective or a task
They encounter and interact with

written or spoken texts
chosen by the teacher/themselves
they come to an
awareness of pattern
as they involve a range of
comprehension strategies:
context clues, non-verbal clues, experience of the world
In fulfilling their task or objective they acquire a
provisional understanding of how the language works.
Over time they are then involved by their own motivation and/or through language learning experiences
provided by their teacher(s) in
testing and trialling their understanding of patterns.
From these patterns they formulate and hypothesise
Provisional language rules.
With further trialling and exposure to wider contexts they
amend and refine the hypothesised rule.

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(Source: King, L. and P. Boaks (eds) 1994 Grammar! A conference report. CILT)

If this characterisation reflects the way learners develop competence it is very important that the organisation of learning activities provides ample opportunity for speaking and writing activities since output is an important part of the learning process. Such activities are considered to aid learning in a number of possible ways including the following:

- By providing an opportunity for meaningful practice – learners learn to write by writing and to speak by speaking.
- By providing learners with a way of testing out the hypotheses that they have been forming about the target language
- By generating responses e.g. corrections etc. which can provide learners with information about the comprehensibility or well-formedness of their utterances
- By encouraging learners to pay attention to grammatical accuracy so as to make their speech and writing more ‘target-like’ and intelligible.

Therefore, while some learners may have very limited potential needs in relation to writing for example, they should nonetheless be encouraged to engage in the type of writing activities that fulfils these functions.

2.7 Activities that Promote Linguistic Progression

Since learners appear to learn "naturally" even in the classroom by following their own route it is essential that their active participation be facilitated as far as possible. Activities having the

essential that their active participation be facilitated as far as possible. Activities having the following characteristics may provide the context for extending communicative and grammatical competence.

Activities which:

- encourage awareness of pattern
- draw attention to form/meaning relationships
- encourage learners to apply newly acquired language independently in defined contexts
- enable learners to try out new language in fresh contexts
- provide learners with opportunities to formulate provisional rules
- encourage learners to exercise choice in the language they use
- enable learners to refine provisional rules and draw conclusions
- require learners to use complex sentences linked by connectives (e.g. *parce que, à*

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cause de, pendant, ensuite etc.)

- invite learners to give sustained accounts.

(Source: King: *L, and Æ Books, (ets), Grammar A conference report.*

1994 CILT). Examples of activities incorporating these characteristics are given in subsequent chapters.

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3. The Role of Grammar

Summary:

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Grammar within a Communicative Approach
- 3.3 Teaching Grammar
- 3.4 Inductive Approaches
- 3.5 Deductive Approaches
- 3.6 Error Tolerance and Correction

3.1 Introduction

A communicative approach does not imply that the teaching of grammar is of secondary importance or that fluency should be sought at the expense of accuracy. If the learners are to be able to find their own way and process the input encountered in authentic texts they will need an understanding of the system of words and rules that underlies the language they are learning. It is also important to inculcate habits of accuracy in pupils alongside the confidence to speak/write fluently.

The General Activity **11, 5** in particular requires learners to engage in activities designed to develop their grammatical knowledge and skills:

Consulting reference materials (e.g. dictionaries and grammars) relating to the vocabulary and grammar of the target language

Performance Targets:

- Using vocabulary correctly and appropriately with the help of dictionaries.
- Learning to cope with simple grammatical terminology relating to the target language.
 - Using target language forms correctly on the basis of explanations in grammars written in English, Irish or in the target language.

3.2 Grammar within a communicative approach

(a) Current approaches to grammar teaching point to the need to locate it within the communicative function. Understanding the rules of grammar should not be an end in itself. Learners should be helped to recognise the communicative value of grammatical structures. Grammatical structure appears to develop in learners' speech in response to communicative need i.e. learners acquire a form and the ability to use it productively when it assumes a critical role for the learner in communicating essential

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information.

(b) Formal and extensive grammar presentations should be restricted. Exercises that require practice of mechanical drills which students have no choice in their answers are of limited utility. More effective learning may result from exercises where the context requires students to choose between alternative responses. Making the correct choice should arise from comprehension of the text rather than purely displaying knowledge of the grammatical rule.

The following exercises illustrate the point made in (a) above i.e they draw the learners' attention to role of a grammatical structure in the case – the subjunctive – in communicating essential information:

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3.3 Pupils also learn best when what has to be learnt is contextualised. In authentic materials language is presented in context with a function beyond mere demonstration of a grammatical point. Teachers might utilise authentic recordings and other texts more extensively in the teaching of grammar.

3.4 Teaching grammar

Current approaches to grammar teaching are based on the realisation that the learner possesses his/her own inbuilt system and that some subconscious processes are impervious to outside manipulation. Studies of second language acquisition suggest that a consciousness-raising approach to

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grammar which requires learners, either deductively or inductively, to become aware of features of the target language may help them to acquire an explicit knowledge of the target language grammar, which may, eventually, feed into the acquisition process.

Where it is found necessary to conduct these activities in English, French could be gradually introduced for further explanation. To facilitate this learners should be helped to familiarize themselves with the linguistic conventions and expressions that can be used for this purpose.

3.5 Inductive approaches

An **inductive approach** encourages students to discover for themselves the underlying patterns, structures etc. of the target language. This could be based on deliberately organised contrasting examples of that structure. Different colour marker pens can be used to highlight various grammatical aspects of the input (e.g. masculine/feminine forms).

If learners are required to exercise intellectual effort by forming and testing hypotheses about a targeted feature of the linguistic system of the other language this may result in greater retention. The activities in the following example help the learners to form hypotheses about the rule governing agreement of the past participle.

2.6 Deductive approaches

In a **deductive approach** students are given an explanation of the grammatical pattern or structure in question with some examples. In both approaches follow-up exercises can test in various ways the students' comprehension of the pattern in question. For example, in a close test students might have to decide which tense, mood or verb is correct in the given context. The test items should be different instances from the examples so that the students' ability to transfer what they have learned to new (but parallel situations) is being tested. The active, rather than passive, participation of the students is very important. In the following example the learners are given some information and then required to use this information to draw conclusions for themselves. The following activities are based on the article *Trouver un employ comment être le meilleur candidat* (see chapter one).

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In the following example, the activity provides an opportunity for the learners to transfer the knowledge to new contexts and requires them, at the same time, to focus on the communicative intention of the task:

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2.7 Error tolerance and correction

Learners' errors are considered to be an integral part of the language learning process from which we can gain very significant insights. It has been suggested that first and second language learners make errors in order to test out certain hypotheses about the nature of the language they are learning. Errors may often be the result of learners' generalisations about features of the target language on the basis of a number of possible sources of knowledge. This may be based on knowledge of language including the target language, mother tongue, other languages, the communicative functions of language and world knowledge.

3.8 The teacher can play an important role in this whole process by providing feedback for learners on the basis of their performance. Positive feedback and motivation through praise are considered to be much more effective than negative feedback in changing pupil behaviour. It is important not to place undue emphasis on error correction. Fluency and accuracy are, at the same time, essential features of communication. Therefore a balanced approach is called for.

3.9 Error tolerance should be based on a recognition of the priority of message transfer - generally errors should not be corrected immediately unless they lead to a breakdown of communication. Errors

errors should not be corrected immediately unless they lead to a breakdown of communication. Errors noted in the course of learners' speech and/or writing could be the focus of whole class analysis at a later period. Learners could also be involved in the correction of classmates' mistakes.

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4. Mixed-Ability Teaching

Summary:

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Differentiated Tasks

4.3 Differentiated Texts

4.4 Differentiated Levels

4.1 Introduction

The reality of most classrooms is that they contain students of varying ability. To cater for this reality it may be necessary to adopt a differentiated approach to teaching. A number of strategies is possible e.g.

- Differentiation through classroom organisation
- Differentiation through task
- Differentiation through materials.

4.2 Differentiated Tasks

Group-work and pair-work in particular allow for different outcomes which is vital in mixed-ability classes. Students of similar abilities and aptitudes could be allocated tasks to work on in pairs or groups. This would allow them to work at their own pace. Another pair or group of students could work simultaneously on another related task which might be a sub-component or a high order skill. Members of pairs or groups might then be interchanged for purposes of explaining difficulties to others. Pairs or groups could also pool information through whole class activities.

The setting of open-ended tasks allows each learner to respond according to his or her ability while promoting a sense of challenge and achievement. It is also possible to devise tasks differentiated on the basis of difficulty. Thus in responding to an aural or written stimulus, some learners might be required only to extract global and clearly sequenced information through multiple choice questions. More able learners might be set more demanding goals such as selecting specific details involving the extraction of implicit information or identifying how communicative function is achieved through linguistic or stylistic devices e.g. how tone, attitude etc is expressed.

While weaker learners might be required to identify surface meaning only, others could be asked to interpret texts and separate literal meaning from implied meaning. Transferring information into specific headings in a chart or answering true or false questions can be considered less complex tasks than, say, summarising the contents of a text or drawing comparisons between two texts.

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4.3 Differentiated Texts

Differentiation could also be based on quantity, and quality of texts. In relation to teaching and learning materials these might have to be adapted in some cases for less able learners. More able learners will probably be better able to cope with longer texts which may be based on less familiar or abstract topics while texts with built-in visual supports may be suitable for slower learners.

4.4 Differentiated Levels

The modal based on an integrated approach to all three components of the syllabus suggested in the next section of these guidelines describes activities in relation to the same theme at three different levels of difficulty : While the syllabus framework is common to both Higher and Ordinary levels and designed to cater for the full range of pupil ability in the senior cycle, the reality of the classroom is that some pupils will be more capable than others of performing the various tasks outlined in the Performance Targets. Thus while all pupils should be capable of engaging in some activities related to the various themes some pupils will be capable of pursuing these to a more demanding level e.g. extracting information from more complex texts or speaking and/or writing about a particular topic using a more extensive vocabulary and range of structures and concepts.

5. An Integrated Approach

Summary:

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Planning a Programme of Work
- 4.3 Example of a Workplan
- 4.4 Suggestions for an Integrated Approach

5.1 Introduction

As pointed out above it is not recommended that the three components of the syllabus be taught separately.

An integrated approach across the three components of the syllabus can be implemented by basing a scheme of work on a number of themes/activities where obvious links can be established. One such possibility, for example, involves the following areas:

Learning about language from target language material; (11,1)

Talking and writing about your experience of the target language; (11,4) and

Asking what language you speak/stating what languages you speak (1,1.)

In such an approach learners could be encouraged to use various performance targets to abstract the main points from a spoken or written target language text (11,2) and learn about aspects of language as a social, regional or educational issue (11,1) in the target language community. In this way they would become aware of where the target language is spoken, of other languages spoken in the target language community, and of the importance of language for cultural identity etc. In the course of this input phase, mainly involving listening and reading, learners could build up their vocabulary and expressions related to the theme of language. The next phase would be a productive phase involving learners talking and writing about their experience of the target language.

Other themes that could facilitate an integrated approach across all three components are work, school, leisure activities, goods and services, travel and transport etc.

5.2 Planning a Programme of Work

A well-ordered and adaptable scheme of work should be based on precise objectives both within and between lessons. It is important that learners are clear about what they may expect to learn during the year and what the purpose of the current lesson is.

Before beginning the year's work, it is advisable to study the complete syllabus in order to get an idea of the general content and then choose units which will allow pupils to sample aspects of the entire range of content. Pupils could be invited to indicate their preference for particular performance

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targets to work on the various Activities/Themes.

5.3 Example of a Workplan

A General Activity /Theme could provide the basis for an integrated approach over a number of lessons with clearly projected outcomes in relation to all four skills. The following example relates to the topic of work/studies and is designed on the basis of three consecutive stages progressing gradually from mainly receptive skills to speaking and writing skills. Stages one and two involve activities that should be within the ability range of most senior cycle pupils, while stage three is more demanding and aimed at those pupils capable of coping with this topic at a more abstract level.

5.4 Suggestions for an Integrated Approach

The following is an example of an extended workplan based on an integrated approach in three stages.

Features

- Integrated approach linking units from all three components of the syllabus i.e. cultural awareness, language awareness and basic communicative proficiency
- Short and long term objectives progression in relation to skills (receptive → productive) and difficulty levels
- Gradual elaboration of theme/topic (concrete → abstract).

Sample framework of a workplan based on integration of various themes, activities in three stages.

Topic:

Studies/Work

Stage 1

Syllabus Area: Cultural Awareness

Main Skills: Reading, listening

General Theme/Activity: Learning in the target language about the present-day culture

General Theme/Activity: Learning in the target language about the present-day culture associated with the target language (111,1)
Exploring meaning (11,2)

Stage 2

Syllabus Area: Basic Communicative Proficiency
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Main Skills: Speaking
General Theme/Activity: Managing a Conversation (1,9)
Meeting and getting to know people and maintaining social relations (1,1)
Making plans and discussing future action

Stage 3

Syllabus Area: Cultural Awareness/Basic Communicative Proficiency
Main Skills: Speaking, writing
General Theme/Activity: Describing, discussing everyday life in a target language community (111,3)
Engaging in discussion (1,10).

Implementing the workplan in manageable units:

(Numbers refer to example of activities)

Stage I

General Theme/Activity: Learning in the target language about the culture associated with the target language.
Exploring meaning.

Objectives:

Develop pupils' world, cultural knowledge in the domain i.e. studies/work
Develop learners' awareness of language related to this domain
Develop learners' listening, reading skills
Develop learners' strategies for coping with new vocabulary and structures.

Performance Targets

- Exploring (global) meaning- abstracting the main points from a spoken, written target language text

Possible Activities

- Provide any necessary background information
- Provide/revise key vocabulary and expressions
- Listening to/reading simplified version of text
- Noting main information on the basis of

- Identifying main information on the basis of guided questions
- Scanning, skimming techniques to decipher

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- topic, purpose, location
 - Transferring information to grids, charts
 - True/False questions
 - Matching exercises: main ideas/paragraph, spoken text/written text.
- Identifying attitudes (e.g. critical, supportive, approving, disapproving) on the basis of a speaker's, writer's use of language.
 - Using contextual clues e.g. register, intonation, vocabulary, expressions
 - Matching speech intentions/expressions
 - Selective listening e.g. groupwork: each member has specific task.
- Developing learners' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar related to the topic
 - Vocabulary
 - using cognates, near cognates
 - Guessing intelligently at the meaning of target language forms on the basis of related forms in use and/or other languages
 - grammatical knowledge
 - using contextual clues e.g. completing a gapped text; using dictionaries, synonyms/equivalents
 - word categorisation exercises based on semantic associations
 - matching exercises noun with verb
 - Consulting reference materials related to the vocabulary and grammar of the target language
 - Look up the rule(s)
 - Identify examples of rule(s)/structure(s) in the text
 - Form hypotheses about the rule/structure etc. check in reference grammar
 - Test hypotheses - e.g. forma parallel phrase,
- Developing learners' awareness of register and appropriateness
 - Identifying conventions and features of text types

Stage 2

- General Theme/Activity:**
- Managing a conversation.**
 - Meeting and getting to know people and maintaining social relations.**
 - Making plans and discussing future action.**

Objectives

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Relate domain (studies/work) to learners' personal experience

Develop learners' speaking skills related to domain of studies/work

Provide opportunities for learners to use vocabulary and structures introduced in previous stage

Develop learners' strategies for managing a conversation.

Performance Targets

- Developing learners' strategies for managing a conversation
- Making learners aware of discourse structure

create dialogue.

- Asking for repetition and/or clarification
Structures and Grammar

- Confirming that something has been understood
- Expressing incomprehension
- Ending a conversation
- Developing learners' sensitivity to appropriateness and register
- Enquiring about and describing studies involving different registers

dialogues

adverts/personal qualities/jobs

suggest jobs

self or others

model dialogues

contexts

complete open ended dialogues, insert plausible/appropriate links in gapped dialogues

- Asking about someone's plans for future studies and/or career possibilities
different scenarios, transactional

Possible Activities

- Work on verbal strategies
- Reorder jumbled dialogues
- Match functions and expressions
- Choose from range of options to

- Practise *Linguistic Skills*,

- Choose expression to suit situation

- Separate and order two jumbled

- 'Warm-up' activities e.g.
- matching exercises - cv/jobs,

- Pupils compare each others C.V. and

- Look at adverts and choose job for

- Fill in chart from C.V.
- Pupil mimes (a job) - others guess
- Pupils listen to and study short

- Pupils practise dialogues in new

- Pupils re-order jumbled dialogues
- Pupils complete dialogues i.e.

- Pupils make up their own dialogues.

- Roleplay based on exchanging/sharing information,

and interactional tasks

Performance Targets

- Describing your own plans for future studies and/or career possibilities and/or groups
- Describing any ways in, which learning the target language has affected your future prospects (e.g. career possibilities)

Possible Activities

- Interview/Pairwork: learners exchange information about themselves in pairs or groups
- Groupwork: work on topic of future plans

Writing

- Enquiring about and describing studies, Work
- Describing your own plans for future studies and/or career possibilities

- Filling in gaps in texts e.g. C.V., job application forms, letters of application
- Matching jumbled sentences
- Re-ordering jumbled **sentences**
- Linking sentences to form a text
- Writing a text on the basis of a similar text
- Rewriting a text
- Editing texts
- Letter writing on basis of e.g. C.V, or other text
- Writing letter of application to job advertisement
- Writing personal letters

Stage 3

General Theme/Activity:

Describing, discussing everyday life in a target language community.

Engaging in discussion.

Objectives

- Make learners aware of differences between the two communities in relation to the domain of studies, work.
- Develop pupils' ability to discuss in general terms issues concerning studies, work in relation to Ireland and a target language community

Performance Targets

- Discussing the relative advantages and

Possible Activities

- Acquire background information by reading

disadvantages of the Irish way of life and that of a target language community in respect of this area of experience.

listening to texts

- Revision of useful expressions and vocabulary

- Developing learners' skills for going beyond surface meaning

Identifying meanings present but not overtly expressed
the basis of prior information

- Working out implicit references of statements made in a spoken, written language target text
- Making short pieces of meaningful and Coherent target text out of jumbled or Gapped target language sentences
- Appreciating the 'tone' of a text

Performance Targets

- Recognising the general tone of a spoken, written target language text on the basis of a speaker's/writer's use of language

Expressing something as an opinion stating/confirming/insisting that something is true, untrue, denying, contradicting, taking sides in a discussion

- Negotiating a compromise
- Writing

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- Evaluating content
 - match speech intentions and utterances
- correct contradictions
 - finding evidence for making predictions on
- completed unfinished sentences;
 - completing a gapped text before listening, reading
- drawing conclusions
- confirm, revise predictions

Possible Activities

- Choosing options from multiple choice questions e.g. words underlined in text:

- (a) positive
- (b) negative
- (c) neutral; which words refer to --,

- Practise *Linguistic Skills, Structures and Grammar* (on page 17 of syllabus)
- Provide guidelines to structure the discussion
- Learners work in groups based on various opinions
- Learners practise linguistic conventions for this type of discourse e.g. interrupting, contradicting, disagreeing etc. in small groups
- Learners agree in groups on a compromise decision.

- Summarising a text
 - Giving a personal reaction to a text
 - Making comparisons between France

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and Ireland on the basis of a text

- Writing formal/informal letters.

6. Examples of Activities at Different Stages

Summary

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Stage 1:

- (a) listening/reading activities**
- (b) pairwork**
- (c) roleplay**

6.3 Stage 2:

- (a) introduction**
- (b) speaking activities**
- (c) writing activities**

6.4 Stage 3:

- (a) introduction**
- (b) examples of reading and listening**
- (c) speaking activities**
- (d) writing activities.**

6.5 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter contains examples of activities at the three consecutive stages described in the previous chapter. There is an underlying progression relating to the activities i.e. from activities aimed primarily at developing receptive skills in listening and reading, building up vocabulary etc. to productive skills in speaking and writing which build upon and use the skills acquired at the previous stage. An example is given of how a text can be reintroduced at successive stages to facilitate this progression in the development of the learners' skills. Even in the initial stage it is important to provide learners with opportunities to try out their hypotheses about the target language and with feedback about their performance. Speaking and writing tasks with in-built support that place limited demands on the

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learners can fulfill this function.

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6.2 Stage 1

(a) Listening/Reading activities

The first phase of this model is an introductory one providing a basis for the later stages and ensuring that the pupils' spoken and written production is supported by having ample input before they are required to engage in productive activities. The following are examples of suitable listening and reading activities for the introductory phase to such a topic. In these examples the learners are provided with a grid or clues directing them to the main points in the text.

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(b) Pairwork

In stage one the pupils could work initially in pairs on vocabulary learning activities. They might then for example engage in grouping words into semantic networks based on various categories e.g. classifying key words and phrases from a text under grammatical or other headings. This prepares them for the main language content and provides them with a good example of what to expect in the text.

Pairwork activities might involve the exchange of information which is genuinely new to the other partner, either because the knowledge is personal or because they have each been supplied with complementary details.

Pairwork could also involve learners listening to or reading prepared dialogues. Initial activities might also require them to match up utterances or to order a jumbled dialogue. These exercises can be done by pupils working on their own. They could then discuss in pairs e.g. the roles to be played, the order of the dialogue etc. Follow-up activities could build on their receptive competence by requiring them to construct new dialogues based on the ones they have just been working on. Other follow up activities such as one partner reporting what the other partner said allows for the language to be moved one step further e.g. into the past tense, indirect speech etc. Writing skills could be incorporated by having learners fill in missing words in worksheets with similar dialogues.

Working on dialogues is also a suitable activity for pairwork. In this example of roleplay the participants are provided with the broad outline of the task but also given freedom to discuss the order of the dialogue etc.

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The next task is a good example of how pairwork can be used to present a grammar-related exercise in a communicative context. The learners are required to work firstly on the information content of the text and then to use this information as the basis for a communicative activity involving the use of particular grammatical structures.

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© **Roleplay**

Roleplay activities in particular provide for an optimal workout of the general activities/themes and performance targets specified under Basic Communicative Proficiency in the syllabus. Such activities require learners to use language in a number of different ways and provide a means of going beyond the necessary limited discourse of the classroom. They also offer an opportunity to focus on such aspects of communicative competence as appropriateness and accuracy. Roleplay situations can be selected to develop the learners' command of general social language or to elicit particular types of language based on simple or complex situations. Simple situations might involve such functions as ordering a drink, asking for information, describing needs etc. The syllabus content also envisages equipping learners with skills necessary for communication in more complex situations which, for example, might involve a degree of suasion such as getting the other person to do something s/he does not want or expect to do.

The organisation of roleplay activities should provide detailed guidelines for learners on how to proceed. Initial roleplay activities might be based on short scenarios where the functions and linguistic choices are limited; gradually learners could proceed to situations where they are free to create their role and have a wider choice in what they can say and a wider choice of linguistic forms to express meaning. Such activities could also have a built-in 'tension' element and require participants to defend or oppose certain positions.

Simulation activities can be based on more complex situations still and involve participants in more imaginary situations. Simulation activities provide an opportunity for project work also and learners could engage in a co-operative activity such as the preparation of a radio or television programme etc.

The following are examples of roleplay situations arising from the work/studies topic. In these examples the participants are also given the freedom to make choices in relation to linguistic structures etc. that could be used to achieve the communicative intent:

The introductory phase (stage one) of the integrated approach as suggested above is aimed at equipping the pupils with the background knowledge, vocabulary and structures that they will require when they engage in speaking and writing activities related to the chosen topics. While some speaking and writing activities were suggested these were mainly of the guided variety within a supporting framework. Activities of a freer nature i.e involving choice and greater independence on the part of the learners can then be introduced to build on the skills developed in an earlier phase.

(b) Speaking Activities

While tasks can be used, as in stage one, as stimulus material for dialogues, pairwork and roleplay they can also provide the basis for more open-ended oral activities such as giving personal responses to the content, as in this example

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In the next example the participants are provided with suggestions by way of suitable expressions. Such support may be more necessary for some learners than for others or where the task is more difficult as in this case.

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© Writing Activities

In stage two the initial writing activities could involve matching exercises e.g. sentences, dialogues filling in a form on the basis of information in another text, to create a new text. Other possible activities include writing formal and informal letters. Where appropriate pupils should be given clear guidelines as to layout, expressions etc.

Before they can produce longer pieces of writing learners will need to develop some knowledge of the ways in which words and sentences are combined. Giving them parts of sentences and requiring them to link these together, as in the following example, will help to promote this knowledge

You will need

Six sets of nine strips of card (six strips showing charnières, three strips showing phrases) as shown

below:
Groups work with one set of nine cards each

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Task (a) in this next example provides learners with the guidelines they will require in a subsequent writing task.

Task (b) involves a preliminary organisation of the content material for the writing task

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The following example shows how learners could be assisted by guidelines in a more extensive letter
1

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writing task (based on job advertisements) providing suggestions for each communicative task

The tasks designed for use with this text gradually introduce learners to a more difficult writing task. Task

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(i) helps learners to process the text and acquire information and expressions related to the topic. Task (ii) introduces a relatively easy writing task with supporting expressions. Task (iii) takes the learner a stage further while again providing support for the task.

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6.4 Stage 3: Reading and Listening

(a) Introduction

Stage three of the suggested approach is based on applying more demanding Performance Targets to the chosen texts of work/studies. The specified objectives for reading and listening are intended to be used in conjunction with texts that would be considered more demanding in terms of content and linguistic difficulty. The activities are also aimed at helping pupils to go beyond the surface meaning of particular texts and to evaluate content by identifying attitude, tone and giving and justifying personal reactions to the content.

(b) Examples of Reading/Listening Activities

In this example, Task 1 – a pre-reading activity – is aimed at preparing the reader for the content of the passage through the forming of hypotheses. Task 2 involves comprehension activities based on the confirmation or otherwise of the learners' hypotheses. Task 3 is aimed at the promotion of cultural awareness through comparison of the information retrieved in the previous task with the learners' world knowledge. Task 4 is an example of how learners' might be helped to integrate reading and skills by transferring expressions, structures, vocabulary etc. to another activity.

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(c) *Speaking Activities*

The speaking skills in stage 3 are based also on expressing personal opinions, sometimes at a more abstract level and engaging in discussion and debate. To enable pupils to engage in these types of activities it will be necessary to provide background and cultural information as well as vocabulary and structures needed in these kinds of activities. In the case of the topic of work, materials describing French people's attitudes toward work-related issues and/or surveys showing comparisons etc. could be particularly suitable.

Groupwork, while also suitable at an intermediary stage, could be used at stage three for the purposes of developing areas covered at Stage 2 in pairwork.

Having worked on exercises in pairs learners might then be organised into larger groups to introduce new elements involving 3 or 4 speakers or to work co-operatively on filling in words in a worksheet words that proved difficult. Group work is also suitable for problem solving activities or for working on debates etc. The general activity **Engaging in discussion** provides a framework on which to base pairwork and groupwork.

Pairs or groups could initially work on expressing something as an opinion. Groups could then take up a stance and work on ordering points in a discussion.

An opposing group could work on rebutting these points through working on such functions as

stating that something is true/untrue

insisting that something is true/untrue

denying

contradicting

finally groups could work together on tasks such as

negotiating a compromise

concluding a discussion.

To make sure that all members of the group participate in the debate, cue-cards could be distributed assigning different roles to different students.

The following task is an example of such an activity involving the organisation of ideas and familiarisation with language necessary to engage subsequently in the type of tasks listed above:

The following short text containing information about French peoples' priorities and therefore useful in the promotion of cultural awareness could be used as a stimulus for speaking activities including (a) the carrying out of a similar survey in class involving the justification of various choices, (b) comparison with results below and (c) discussion of any differences etc.

The next example shows how a longer text could be used as the basis for a speaking or writing activity after the learners had worked on the linguistic and information content and had also engaged in guided speaking activities similar to the one suggested for this text in Stage 1. (See pages 15 and 56)

Roselyne dormait dans la cuisine.

1. Quand Roselyne a répondu à l'annonce par téléphone, elle s'est présentée et elle a posé des questions sur l'emploi proposé.

Imaginez le dialogue entre elle et Monsieur ou Madame Olivier (100-120 mots).

2. Roselyne est allée porter plainte à la gendarmerie. Rapportez le dialogue entre elle et les gendarmes 100- 120mots.

In this example learners are required to engage in comprehension activities to build up a linguistic resource for subsequent use in productive activities.

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© Writing Activities

The writing activities suggested at Stage 3 – summarising the main points of a text, giving a personal reaction to a text, making comparisons on the basis of a text, writing formal/informal letters are also more demanding than the activities suggested for Stage 2 particularly if the texts used as a stimulus are more complex.

The next example has been chosen to suggest how a text that has been used at an earlier stage for guided activities etc. can be re-introduced at a subsequent stage as the basis for (more difficult) productive activities. The repeated use of the same stimulus can help to ensure a progression in the development of the learners' skills.

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A writing task can also be created by requiring the students to imagine themselves in a particular role using a text for support.

6.5 Conclusion

As outlined in the Introduction it may not be always considered possible or desirable to draw up such a detailed scheme of work. It is desirable however that the nature and progression of activities conform to some framework designed to facilitate the integration of syllabus content and the planned development of learner skills.

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7. Literary Texts

Summary:

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Literary texts and language awareness

7.3 Literary texts and Cultural awareness

7.1 Introduction

It is envisaged in the senior cycle syllabus that learners would be exposed to some literary texts in the target language. Literature in particular encourages an affective involvement through personal response and so promotes the students' personal development. While language gives access to literature, literature is an authentic example of how language functions. Learners' linguistic competence can be enhanced by learning to identify communicative function and the way this is realised in literary texts.

Therefore the General Activity/Themes the syllabus, as well as requiring students to:

- **Read modern literary texts (notably novels, short stories, poems and plays) in the target language**

aim also to develop their awareness of how communicative function is achieved in such texts through activities like:

- Exploring target language texts as sources of linguistic information/illustration
- Identifying meanings present but not overtly expressed in such a text
- Appreciating the tone of such a text, etc.

7.2 Literary texts and language awareness

The development of such language awareness skills can aid the language learning process, widen the learner's experience and enhance his/her enjoyment from reading. These skills can be fostered by encouraging students through activities designed to help them to understand language as a specific linguistic variety, as the symbolisation of the author's vision etc. Literary texts can also be used as a source for grammar-focused activities as in the following example:

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7.3 Literary texts and cultural awareness

The learners' cultural awareness can also be promoted through reading literary texts. Foreign literature offers students an insight into the culture of the target language community and literature provides access to culture in a meaningful, contextualised and authentic way.

The Cultural Awareness component of the syllabus contains numerous suggestions for methodological approaches of literary texts in this regard e.g. understanding literary texts dealing with aspects of the life of a target language community including:

- **everyday life**
 - **folklore and traditional customs**

The approaches suggested in the syllabus therefore aim to go beyond plot, character and content and to continue both an affective and intellectual interaction with the text.

7.4 Selection of texts

It is essential that the selection of texts reflect linguistic and conceptual appropriateness if learners are not to remain indifferent and uninterested. It might be possible in some cases for students to be involved in the selection of texts on the basis of prior consideration of selected extracts. Learners should also be encouraged to consider taking up the option (where available) of engaging in project work based on literary texts. In oral work in the classroom students should be encouraged to discuss foreign literary texts they have read.

8. Assessment

Summary:

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Short-term Objectives
- 8.3 Assessment Criteria
- 8.4 Grade Descriptions

8.1 Introduction

The syllabus outlines the parameters of summative assessment. Ongoing assessment of pupil performance is a constant feature of good teaching which facilitates improved pupil performance and provides a basis upon which teaching and learning programmes can be planned. Learners should also be encouraged to assess their own progress. The skilled and judicious use of a variety of assessment techniques can have a positive effect on classroom practice and allow for the early identification of high and low achievers and underachievers. There is a continuum of assessment, ranging from classroom observation, questioning and dialogue, homework, to structured tests developed at school level and national certificate examinations. More formal testing in the sense of summative judgement at the end of a specific period of time (e.g. a school term) or of a specific unit of study (e.g. one or more General Activity/Themes of the syllabus) may take the form of oral, or written tests or assignments developed by the teacher.

8.2 Short-term Objectives

To provide for continuity of learning it may be helpful for teachers to identify short-term objectives in relation to the syllabus. Such an approach could be based on the selection of one or more General Activity/Themes across the three components of the syllabus with some of the Performance Targets providing the projected learning outcomes.

8.3 Assessment Criteria

As outlined in the syllabus assessment criteria will take account of:

- (i) ability to transfer meaning and
- (ii) degrees of accuracy and appropriateness of language including the range of vocabulary and structures used.

8.3.1 Oral Production

The following criteria will be used to assess oral competence in the public examinations: